



UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

# *Tribute to Retirees*

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

**Fall, 2024**

Sponsored by the Association of Retired Faculty and Staff,  
University of West Georgia University Advancement,  
Office of Human Resources,  
and University of West Georgia Foundation  
Meg Cooper & Francesca Taylor (Eds.)

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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### **ARFS Coordinating Council Members (2023-2024)**

- Anne Richards (President, USGRC voting member, GA-HERO secretary, ARFS Listserv Manager, Newsletter Committee, Nominating Committee, Programs/Events Committee), Psychology
- Meg Cooper (Past President, USGRC alternate member, GA-HERO representative, Newsletter Committee, Nominating Committee chairperson, Programs/Events Committee), Special Education
- Frank Pritchett (Vice President, Newsletter Committee chairperson), Alumni Relations
- Francesca Taylor (Secretary, Programs/Events Committee), Academic Testing Services
- Sally Roberts (Treasurer), Publications and Printing
- Micheal Crafton (At-Large Member), English and UWG administration
- Tricia Durrough (At-Large Member), Business and Finance
- Rolanda Farmer (At-Large Member, Programs/Events Committee), Center for Teaching and Learning
- Kevin Hibbard (At-Large Member), Music
- Cecilia Lee (At-Large Member), Spanish
- Ann McCleary (At-Large Member, Nominating Committee), History
- Anita Thomas (At-Large Member), Richards College of Business
- John von Eschenbach (At-Large Member, Scholarship Committee chairperson, Nominating Committee), Curriculum and Instruction
- Alice Wesley (At-Large Member, Programs/Events Committee), Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



Colleagues,

Congratulations on your retirement! I want to share my appreciation and admiration as you begin a new chapter in your life. UWG has a glorious history spanning 118 years. Having added to the collective strength of our organization, you will forever be an integral part of our history.

Your hard work and passion have helped generations of UWG students fulfill their dreams, ensuring a transformative higher education experience. As interim President, it is my honor to build upon your work and the legacy you have helped establish.

I hope you stay connected and continue to be part of the UWG community. The Association of Retired Faculty and Staff offers a wonderful opportunity to remain involved and stay updated on the latest news from campus and your fellow retirees.

I wish you joy, fulfillment, and fond memories. All of us at UWG will always hold a special place for you in our hearts.

Go West, and Go Wolves!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashwani Monga". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Ashwani Monga, Ph.D.  
*Interim President*  
**University of West Georgia**

## **The Association of Retired Faculty & Staff (ARFS)**

was established in 2004 as a voluntary association of the university's retired faculty and staff who joined together for several purposes: to promote the well-being of its members; support the University of West Georgia retiree community; foster continued involvement of retirees in the mission of the university; facilitate communication between the university and its retirees; seek to promote the scholarly, social, and cultural interests of the retiree community; and address matters related to benefits and resources for retirees.

Membership in ARFS is free and members decide for themselves how much involvement they wish to have in the organization and its activities.

Each year, ARFS recognizes persons from the faculty and staff who have retired from full-time employment at the university. A fall reception for recent retirees is combined with an annual retiree reunion and the ARFS annual meeting. Participating retirees receive a medallion from the university with their name, department, and years of service engraved on it. Those attending the reception will have a formal picture taken when they come onstage to receive the medallion at the reception. Retirees may also choose to be included in this commemorative booklet.

This year our fall reception will include a celebration of ARFS' 20th birthday. We have invited Andy Leavitt, former UWG Associate Vice President for Advancement and Development who was instrumental in ARFS' founding, to speak to the group. We also will be recognizing others, whom we are calling Founders, who were active in ARFS' early history. Based on memories and records, these include Steven Broome, Tom Carrere, Mary Creamer, Dale Duffey, Jerry and Lucy Garmon, Dotti Green, Louis Larson, Glenn and Debbie Novak, Nancy Pollard, Frank Pritchett, Clois Reese, Anne Richards, Carolyn Scherm, Carole Scott, Henry Setter, Mel Steely, and Burdett and Shirley Wantland.

About ten years ago, ARFS joined a national organization of retiree organizations in higher education, known as AROHE (Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education -- <https://www.arohe.org/>). Through a state subsidiary of that group, GA-HERO (<https://ga-hero.org/>), some of us have attended meetings with retirees in higher education from all around Georgia. In the meetings, we have learned a lot about what other retiree organizations are doing. Any of you are welcome to join those who attend these meetings. Meetings/events have been organized as in-person or online gatherings.

In 2015 the University System of Georgia created a retiree council (USGRC) to advise the Chancellor's Office and the Board of Regents on matters of consequence to retirees. The president of the ARFS Coordinating Council is our "official voting member" at USGRC meetings, and we are also allowed a designated "alternate mem-

ber” in the event our official voting member cannot make the meeting. Currently, Anne Richards is serving as the official representative of UWG and also takes notes to pass along to others. Meg Cooper is serving as the alternate member. While the USGRC continues to have a focus on Medicare-eligible retirees’ use of Alight Retiree Health Solutions (formerly the Aon Retiree Healthcare Exchange), it is also looking at many other issues of concern to retirees, including access to library resources on system campuses, faculty emeriti status, well-being resources/services for retirees, and communication matters.

To become a member of ARFS is easy. Just contact Meg Cooper (mcooper@emeriti.westga.edu, 770-880-5078), Anne Richards (arichard@emeriti.westga.edu, 770-834-8143), or Lauren Niedringhaus (lniedringhaus@westga.edu, 678-839-1034) to let us know you want to join. We will need contact information. An e-mail address will help most since we use the ARFS listserv to share a variety of information. However, our newsletter, *The Rejuvenator*, is also distributed by postal mail when necessary. You may qualify as an Active Member (retired UWG faculty/staff who meet the established BOR retirement criteria to be eligible for retirement with Life and Health benefits) or an Associate Member (UWG retirees who do not meet the BOR criteria, spouses/domestic partners of UWG retirees, retirees from other institutions of higher learning, or UWG faculty/staff who are within a few years of their planned retirement date). We invite you to join us in this organization.

We also hope you will take advantage of some or all of the benefits available to you as a retiree (those meeting BOR retirement criteria). There are a lot of them, such as a courtesy parking hangtag, eligibility for free membership to utilize all facilities in the Campus Center, eligibility to check out books from the Ingram Library, reduced rates on West Georgia Theatre Company performances, free admission to UWG athletic events, and a 10% discount at the University Bookstore. We continue to look into the possibility of securing other benefits as well.

## UWG Retiree Legacy Scholarship

We hope to hear from the 2024-2025 awardee as part of our annual reunion.

### Eligibility Criteria:

- Recipients will be full-time graduate or undergraduate students who are retirees of the institution or who are direct descendants or an immediate family relation of a retired faculty or staff member (with a minimum of 10 years of service to the institution).
- Recipients will have a minimum cumulative GPA 2.5, with preference given to applicants with a higher GPA.
- Preference will be given to applicants with a demonstrated financial need as determined by the UWG Financial Aid Office.

### For Future Applicants:

Students may apply by going to the University of West Georgia Scholarship Portal ([westga.edu/scholarships](https://westga.edu/scholarships)) and following the instructions. Currently, the UWG Scholarship Portal is slated to open in early spring, sometime around February, with the application window closing at the end of June.

If you would like to make a gift to help fund this scholarship, check out <https://www.westga.edu/give/how-to-give> for ways you can contribute, including through an online giving form. Be sure to designate the “UWG Retiree Legacy Scholarship” if you wish to support this scholarship. Another option is to go directly to <https://giving.westga.edu/arfs/> where you can choose to donate to ARFS or to the UWG Retiree Legacy Scholarship online. You could also contact Jessica Blackwood, Assistant Director of Stewardship, at 678-839-3820 or [jblackwood@westga.edu](mailto:jblackwood@westga.edu) if you have any questions about giving to UWG.

# Retired Faculty & Staff Tribute Booklet

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

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## **A TOAST TO THE NEW UWG RETIREES**

By Cecilia Lee

Presented as part of her comments at the 2023 annual retiree reunion on  
October 7, 2023

Wishing you a rich life and happy times ahead.

May the grass grow greener in your garden.

May you find what you are looking for.

May each day bring you laughter and excitement.

May you be blessed with love and faithful friends.

Enjoy your success. You deserve it. You have worked  
hard. Keep doing what you like. Let others do the rest.

Let the sun brighten your days.

Let the wind caress your face.

Remember the good. Forget the bad. Be wise.

Seize the day and find the magical sense of life.

Cry if you need to, but try to keep a smile.

Do not believe your mirror. Pretend it tells a lie.

Explore the unknown. Let go of the past.

Keep your fire burning. Be amazed. Be surprised.

Discover a new bird in your yard, a new star in the sky.

Be aware. Be bold. This is your chance.

It is a new beginning, take a stance.

Fight against routines. Get off the beaten path.

Charge your creativity. Be inspired.

Break new ground. Reach for the stars.



# Lynn S. Anderson

**Position held:** Professor of French

**Department:** Foreign Languages and Literature

**Years of Service:** 2008-2024



## **Tribute Statement:**

When Dr. Lynn Anderson arrived at UWG in 2008, the French program had just gone through a period of turmoil. Her steady hand lent stability to the program and helped generate a period of growth and innovation. Whether directing our month-long study abroad program in Tours, perfecting crucial bridge courses in composition and conversation as well as one on gender and sexuality in Francophone cinema, or mentoring students through research projects and post-graduation decisions, Lynn approached her work with great care and professionalism. Her research on modern French poetry illuminated some of the most important literary works of the twentieth century.

She was deeply invested in student success, from progress to graduation, to intellectual growth, to career planning. She also made valuable and impactful service contributions, taking on roles as French section head and International Languages and Cultures representative on the college executive committee. In terms of campus life, Lynn was known for her thought-provoking introductions to French film screenings, as she demonstrated an ability to make films from distant times and cultures relevant to the lives and experiences of attendees. We will miss her greatly and wish her all the best for her retirement on her land in Kansas.

*[Robert Kilpatrick, Chair, Department of English, Film, Languages, and Performing Arts, UWG]*

## **Plans for Retirement:**

- moving to her rural property in Lawrence, Kansas, where she will start shiitake mushroom logs in the woodlands and put up beehives
- catching up with friends and family
- visiting state and national parks around the country

# Janet S. Barden

**Position held:** Electrician

**Department:** Maintenance

**Years of Service:** 1996-2023

## **Tribute Statement:**

As former chair of the Political Science Department, I have many fine memories of Janet. She is a wonderful electrician who worked on many projects throughout campus, including Pafford (where I was building manager). Janet is known for being competent and professional.

Janet fixed lights and numerous other power issues on campus. She was in charge of BMOC Asset Tagging. She quickly took charge of the project and, according to her colleagues, was very good at it. It helped UWG get all the assets loaded into the UWG system. She was also the facilities photographer, taking all the pictures for events. She shared the photographs with others, and the pictures invoke precious memories of coworkers and special events on campus.

Overall, many of Janet's co-workers appreciate Janet's professional work ethic. Countless colleagues have described Janet as having a wonderfully pleasant personality. She always has a smile on her face. She is also known for caring for those in need. As one of my colleagues noted, "Janet is always willing to assist others." Janet also helped her colleagues when asked to visit their homes and fix electrical problems.

We appreciate all that Janet has done for UWG and hope she has a wonderful retirement!

*[Robert Schaefer, Professor, Political Science, UWG]*

## **Plans for Retirement:**

- spending time with her 88-year-old dad
- hoping to take cruises to the Bahamas, Caribbean, and the Panama Canal
- working around the house
- helping her kids get through college



# Amin Boumenir

**Position held:** Professor

**Department:** Mathematics

**Years of Service:** 2001-2010, 2015-2017



## **Tribute Statement:**

Dr. Amin Boumenir arrived at West Georgia in 2001 after teaching mathematics at four different institutions of higher education in four different countries. After an initial stint at UWG, he moved to Kuwait University for a few years, returning to UWG in 2015 and staying until his recent retirement.

Amin's contributions to the field of Mathematics are extensive. He has served as an editor, referee, and reviewer for numerous professional journals; been an active member of the American Mathematical Society; and written or cowritten 112 publications and three book chapters. His presentations include some where he was specifically invited to talk and some at exclusive meetings where attendance was restricted to those specifically invited.

Amin also engaged in a variety of activities supporting his department, programs in Mathematics, and UWG as a whole. Examples include participating on search committees, assisting with accreditation efforts, serving on university-wide committees, supporting students in their research, organizing seminars, and helping develop program materials.

While at UWG, Amin was lucky enough to have a supportive colleague. He and Dr. Vu Kim Tuan worked together professionally and provided each other support to make it to retirement from UWG. Both will be missed for their contributions.

*[Meg Cooper, ARFS Coordinating Council Past President, UWG]*

## **Plans for Retirement:**

- spending time on his fishing boat in Florida, for now

# Subhan Jim Burton

**Position held:** Professor

**Department:** Marketing

**Years of Service:** 1990-2023



## **Tribute Statement:**

When he retired, Dr. Burton was the longest-serving full professor at UWG. He came to West Georgia College as a full professor after military service, business experience as President /VP, and teaching at several institutions. Jim's accomplishments at UWG include leading international service projects for young people; facilitating 100+ management training workshops, including the annual Leadership Academy for the Carroll Chamber of Commerce; and, together with his late wife, Pat, creating an endowed scholarship to honor his mother, Helen Harper Burton. Jim received the Golden Heart Award for selfless service to others from the Sufi Order International in 2013.

Jim excelled in what he did at UWG, but especially in his teaching and relationships with students. I was always amazed that his students would gather in his office before class and carry all his teaching materials to class for him, returning them all after class – a trick most faculty members have never been able to pull off!

On a personal note, I miss having Jim around. We disagree on almost everything outside of our love for our students and UWG. He is the biggest consumer of conspiracy theories in the world. But, in spite of our disagreements, we still are very good friends. I wish more Americans could have such a relationship.

*[Dr. Beheruz Sethna, Regents' Professor of Marketing, Richards College of Business, UWG]*

## **Plans for Retirement:**

- teaching some adjunct classes at UWG
- teaching interfaith spiritual classes online
- leading spiritual retreats at Windsong Retreat Center
- traveling
- staying active in politics

## Julia Chibbaro

**Position held:** Professor

**Department:** Counseling & Educational  
Psychology

**Years of Service:** 2004-2023

### **Tribute Statement:**

Dr. Julia Chibbaro first joined the Counselor Education faculty at the University of West Georgia in 2004. In her 19 years in the College of Education, Dr. Chibbaro instructed numerous graduate courses, directed 19 doctoral dissertations, served as a program coordinator, advised the Gamma Zeta chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, and achieved both tenure and promotion to the rank of full Professor. She also maintained active scholarship and service within the field of Professional Counseling and volunteered within our local community.

Unsurprisingly, Dr. Chibbaro was known for her enthusiasm for the profession and for her joyful disposition. Students consistently commented on how much they enjoyed working with Dr. Chibbaro and, even following her retirement, I continue to hear from former students that they “love Dr. Chibbaro.” Indeed, the COE halls feel different without Dr. Chibbaro’s laughter permeating them. Dr. Chibbaro will be missed, but she has left a legacy in the program and has impressed countless students throughout her tenure at UWG.

*[Julia Whisenhunt; Professor of Counselor Education, Assistant Chair, and Program Director; UWG]*

### **Plans for Retirement:**

- trying to learn to play golf
- spending time with grandchildren
- volunteering



# Kelley Christopher

**Position held:** Senior Lecturer

**Department:** Sociology and Criminology

**Years of Service:** 2009-2023

## **Tribute Statement:**

Kelley and I started together as new faculty in Sociology and Criminology in 2009. She was a seasoned collegiate-level instructor; I was brand new. She advised and guided me in those first years, then became one of my very best friends.

While I am the Director of Prison Education at UWG, taking UWG to prisons was Kelley's brainchild. Her specialties are reentry and incarceration. She asked me to join her in developing a prison education project, and UWG was selected to be a Second Chance Pell Experiment Site. Because of Kelley, 215+ incarcerated students will take UWG classes behind bars in the 2024-2025 academic year.

She was probably the most beloved professor on campus. Students raved about her teaching and knew she cared about them as humans. There was always a line of students waiting to speak with her -- not for help on an assignment but for guidance and mentorship in life and their future career.

Kelley is currently the Deputy Commissioner of Prisons for the State of Mississippi. Hopefully in her new job she will continue to be able to bring mason jars of sweet tea and have regular access to ice to put in it, sipping on it all day.

*[Tiffany Parsons, Director, Prison Education, University College and Lecturer of Sociology, UWG]*

## **Plans for Retirement:**

- visiting children and grandchildren in Georgia



## Melanie Nunnelly Clay, BS, MPA, EdS, Ph.D.

**Position held:** Dean

**Department:** USG eCampus

**Years of Service:** 1996-2023



### **Tribute Statement:**

Melanie joined UWG as the Director of Distance Education, leading the drive to transition UWG into a world leader in online teaching and learning. She developed and published the prestigious *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration* and collaborated with Continuing Education to offer the first Distance Learning Certificate Program in Georgia. She organized and ran the first Distance Learning Administration Conference, still the premier conference for online leaders. Her greatest career achievement may be winning the competitive proposal to administer USG eCore. She recruited a small crew of staff to help reimagine and run the program, later adding USG eMajor and then founding USG eCampus—currently regarded as the most successful online collaborative in the world with more than 125 full-time employees managing 60(k)+ enrollments. There isn't space to list all of Melanie's accomplishments, but it is safe to say there are tens of thousands of students who have progressed on their educational journeys because of her work; thousands of practitioners, administrators, and scholars who have advanced the cause of making education better because of her contributions; and hundreds of staff members and faculty who have advanced their work, and even built their careers, around her vision. She is a rock star, a legend, and a great friend.

*[Jason Huett, Dean of USG eCampus and Associate Professor of Instructional Technology and Design, UWG; Janet Gubbins, Director of USG Faculty Development and former Director of UWG Online, UWG]*

### **Plans for Retirement:**

In her retirement she is still working part-time for E-Core through the University of North Georgia; she and Matthew have been traveling a lot; and they are involved in the further development of the Community First United Methodist Church

# David Dean

**Position held:** Head Football Coach

**Department:** Athletics

**Years of Service:** 1992-1999, 2017-2023



**Tribute Statement:**

Two words leap to the forefront in describing David Dean: professionalism and integrity. Whether on campus, in the community, or on the sidelines leading his football programs over the years, David has always proven himself to be a positive influence on those around him.

As an assistant football coach at West Georgia early in his coaching career and returning later as head football coach, David has always been one to learn from his experiences in order to enhance his ability to communicate and lead young athletes to seize upon every capability they possess.

David’s career as head football coach at West Georgia has been one marked by success, not only from a perspective of wins and losses but also from the standpoint of molding student athletes into young men who then positively influence the communities in which they ultimately reside.

It is a great compliment to David that he enjoys today respect and admiration from his coaching peers across the country. There are very few who have merited this type of respect and admiration. David Dean is a true champion among his student athletes, university administrators, and fellow coaches, whether the coaches are part of his staff or his opponents.

*[Eddie Duffey, former Senior Athletic Director, UWG]*

**Plans for Retirement:**

- playing golf
- doing yard work
- visiting his three daughters



## Amy Farmer, MSN, FNP-BC

**Position held:** Associate Professor

**Department:** School of Nursing

**Years of Service:** 1999-2024



### **Tribute Statement:**

Amy's teaching career began in 2003 as a faculty member at Northwestern Technical College and a clinical faculty member at Kennesaw State University. Since that time, until her retirement, Amy has been a role model for both her prelicensure nursing students and other faculty as an Associate Professor in the Tanner Health System School of Nursing (SON). Since arriving at UWG, Amy has made an unforgettable impact as a nurse educator, a mentor, and a leader. She was a strong leader in her role of BSN Director and was invaluable to me as interim Associate Dean of undergraduate programs (2019), giving me guidance from her education and experiences on matters including curricular revision. Amy is a caring, knowledgeable nursing educator who values student learning in clinical settings (on campus and off campus). She oversaw students in the Wellstar Douglas facility in the DEU, which greatly helped solidify the SON's presence there. Amy has served on multiple SON and UWG committees, giving a voice to SON interests across campus. She was invited to provide information and lectures to various community programs, such as the Optimist Club of Carrollton. She will be missed now that she has retired from UWG.

*[Nancy Capponi, Assistant Professor, Tanner Health System School of Nursing, UWG]*

### **Plans for Retirement:**

- working two part-time nursing-related jobs, one in nursing education and one as a part-time provider of nursing care
- spending more time with her family

# Myrna W. Gantner

**Positions held:** Associate Professor, Department Chairperson; Director of P16 and School Collaboration; Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Interim Vice President and Provost, Associate Provost

**Departments:** Department of Educational Leadership; College of Education; Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs



**Years of Service:** 2000-2023

## Tribute Statement:

Professor Myrna Gantner’s record would speak for itself. In fact, I really think we should just put that record here for all to read. But we can’t, and the reason is that it is too long. Myrna has an astonishing number of publications, presentations, and awards, on all levels, and ranging from the scientific to the holistic. After her education at the University of Texas in El Paso and her work in the K-12 arena and in the medical field, she came to West Georgia in 2000 with a formidable skill set in the scientific approach to educational leadership. I got to watch her work in 2014 when she served as Associate Provost, a position she arrived at due to her excellent work as an academic leader, principally as chair of the Department of Educational Leadership. What I observed was an intense comprehension of detail and a tenacity in working a project to its successful conclusion. I believe my best working days occurred when she and I worked closely on a project. Certainly, her contributions to UWG have been plentiful. Her work as the interim Provost stands out. Myrna is a fierce academic with a kind and sympathetic heart.

*[Micheal Crafton, Professor Emeritus of English, UWG]*

## Plans for Retirement:

- resting
- living and cooking healthy
- continuing her spiritual journey
- spending time with family, including grandchildren
- gardening
- taking art lessons
- living a healthy, peaceful lifestyle

## Vickie J. Geisler

**Positions held:** Associate Professor, Department Chairperson, Assistant Dean

**Departments:** Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences

**Years of Service:** 1990-2024



### Tribute Statement:

I am honored to write this tribute for my colleague of three decades. As an instructor of the dreaded Organic Chemistry sequence, Vickie adopted a novel paradigm emphasizing active learning. She was regarded as a tough, albeit fair and dedicated, instructor. An extremely successful grant writer, she was the PI of three successful NSF grants worth over a million dollars. She served as Chair of the Department of Chemistry, providing leadership in an era of burgeoning growth. A skilled administrator, she served as an assistant/associate dean alongside four different College of Arts and Sciences deans.

Vickie was a sought-after advisor for pre-health professional students and the advisor for the Emerging Healthcare Leaders (EHL) Club. Club activities included opportunities for community service and visits by admission officers from professional schools, healthcare professionals, and alumni attending professional schools. Her other legacy is her critical contribution to UWG's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Vickie proposed experiential learning, long practiced in Chemistry in the form of undergraduate research, as the theme. She was a part of the team that wrote a proposal adopted by the Provost and coupled with career readiness as UWG's QEP for the next decade.

While Vickie will be missed for her dedication to student success, friendship, and very pragmatic approaches to decision making in academics, her legacies in the form of the continuing EHL Club and QEP will be long lasting.

*[Farooq Khan, Professor of Chemistry, Department of Natural Sciences, UWG]*

### Plans for Retirement:

- traveling
- spending time with family

# A. Bart Gillespie

**Position held:** Director of Advancement Services

**Departments:** Business & Finance, Advancement

**Years of Service:**1993-2023



## Tribute Statement:

Bart was a student employee while attending UWG and was hired by the UWG University Advancement Division after graduating with a BBA in Accounting. For most of his 30-year career at UWG, Bart served as the Director of Advancement Services. As UWG grew and evolved, the Foundation grew and evolved with it. Bart wore many hats and helped implement the Foundation’s first fundraising and accounting systems. Bart is a natural leader and considerate colleague. Mentoring others is Bart’s true passion. He coached many youth teams after hours. This passion and talent helped him be a remarkably successful manager and loved by all.

*[Holly Sailors, Comptroller, Georgia State University Foundation, GSU]*

Bart Gillespie’s retirement marked the end of an era, and his absence has been keenly felt by all who have had the privilege of working with him. Bart was a hard-working and dedicated colleague who brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to his work. In addition to his professional accomplishments, Bart was also a great friend and mentor to many of his colleagues, always willing to lend a helping hand or a listening ear when needed. His legacy will continue to inspire and guide us, and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

*[Tiffany Christman, Executive Assistant to Vice President for University Advancement, UWG]*

## Plans for Retirement:

Bart had been coaching football for 12 years after his work hours were over at Holy Ground Baptist Church Academy. He is now thoroughly enjoying working at this academy full-time as their Athletic Director/Physical Education Coach, as well as their Head Football and Baseball Coach.

# Steve Goodson

**Positions held:** Professor, Chair

**Department:** History

**Years of Service:** 1995-2023



## Tribute Statement:

Dr. Goodson spent 28 years making his presence felt across UWG and Carrollton. Fondly known as “Chief” among his History colleagues, as department chair for almost a decade he provided stability and guidance in a time of continual change. He provided community leadership by serving as Poll Manager for the UWG Precinct since 1997.

More importantly, Steve’s students benefited from his engaging teaching style and willingness to provide meaningful learning experiences. He was the pioneer of History’s first study abroad opportunity (France in 2017). In the classroom, Steve’s use of music as a pedagogical tool was innovative and inspiring.

It is fitting that Steve’s research centered on Hank Williams, the famous country singer who once said “There ain’t a man livin’ who hasn’t talked to his dog.” Steve has deep fondness for dogs and brought his own dog, Barnaby, to campus to meet with his students. The canine community is thrilled that Steve will have more time to spend with them.

Steve is well known for his humor and wit; his epic poems will be sorely missed. But the good news is that he will continue on as an expert for weekly trivia nights, where his intellectual prowess is legendary!

*[Dr. Keith Pacholl, Professor, History Program, UWG]*

## Plans for Retirement:

- lots of reading and continuing learning
- traveling with my wife
- spending time with my son and daughter-in-law
- having fun with my dogs
- participating in old and maybe new hobbies
- perhaps writing another book

## B. Keith Harris

**Positions held:** Professional Design Specialist,  
Logistics Supervisor

**Departments:** Publications & Printing, Housing &  
Residence Life

**Years of Service:** 2004-2024



**Tribute Statement:**

Keith began his journey at UWG in 2004 with Print Services as a dedicated printing pressman, ensuring that every page that came through his hands was crafted with precision and care. His attention to detail and commitment to quality were not just marks of his professionalism, but also reflections of his character.

In 2021, Keith transitioned to working in Housing and Residence Life, where he truly found his calling in supporting students and staff. His warm smile and approachable nature made him a beloved figure among the university’s residents. He went above and beyond his duties, always ready to lend a helping hand, offer a listening ear, or provide wise counsel. His door was always open, and he made everyone feel at home.

Keith’s love of nature and all creatures shines through in everything he does. His caring nature touches everyone he encounters. Since retirement, we are reminded of the countless moments of joy and support he provided to those around him. His legacy of service, kindness, and unwavering commitment to others will live on in the hearts and minds of all who have the privilege of knowing him. We wish him all the best for the future.

*[Brooke Keener, Customer Service Coordinator, Print Services, UWG]*

**Plans for Retirement:**

- traveling to state parks
- fishing
- reading
- volunteering at Whitesburg food pantry
- enjoying spending time with granddaughter

## Dr. Javier E. Hasbun

**Position held:** Professor

**Department:** Physics

**Years of Service:** 1990-2023



### **Tribute Statement:**

As Dr. Javier Hasbun concludes his remarkable career and transitions into retirement, we fondly recall his immense contributions to our academic community. With a profound passion for theoretical physics and an unwavering commitment to teaching and mentorship, Dr. Hasbun has left an enduring impact on students and colleagues alike. His approach to teaching has made complex concepts accessible and inspired countless students to pursue their academic passions. Beyond the classroom, Dr. Hasbun's mentorship has steered individuals through their academic and professional journeys, leaving an incredible imprint on their lives. He has influenced multiple generations of students, fostering their success across diverse scientific fields. Through captivating demonstrations and lectures, he brought the wonders of physics to life, inspiring admiration and gratitude from his students. As we bid him a happy retirement, we express our deepest gratitude for his years of service and commitment to excellence. While his full presence will be missed, his legacy will continue to inspire future generations of scholars for his research in physics remains. We wish Dr. Hasbun a retirement filled with joy, fulfillment, and the knowledge that his influence will endure for years to come.

*[Ajith DeSilva, Professor of Physics, Department of Natural Sciences, UWG]*

### **Plans for Retirement:**

- writing a book on physics for children
- writing a book for application of computational methods in physics
- continuing to collaborate in research with UWG colleagues

# Dr. Jennifer A. Hayes

**Position held:** Academic Advisor

**Department:** USG eCampus

**Years of Service:** 2010-2023



## Tribute Statement:

Dr. Jennifer Hayes started at UWG as an Academic Advisor at the former Excel Center. She later switched to the Newnan Center as an Academic Instructional Support Specialist. Throughout this period, she taught UWG 1101 – First Year Experience. Subsequently, she reflected her passion for guiding and assisting mature students by becoming an Academic Advisor for the University System of Georgia eCampus. She earned two degrees while employed at UWG: an Ed.S. in Media (UWG) and an Ed.D. in Curriculum & Leadership (Columbus State University). She received the 2022 Hackett Award for an exceptional dissertation.

Dr. Hayes’ benevolence has impacted faculty colleagues, staff, and students. She has made significant contributions not only to academic advising in the USG, but also to the whole field of academic advising. Her cheerful and friendly manner positively impacted numerous lives. She actively participated on multiple committees, attended various trainings and conferences to support student achievement, and served as the On-Campus Advisor for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

While it is commonly believed that everyone can be replaced, I firmly believe that Dr. Hayes is an exception to this notion. Her exceptional qualities and contributions will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on the institution for years to come.

*[Dr. Tracy Mitchell, Associate Director, Robinson College of Business, Georgia State University]*

## Plans for Retirement:

Although my retirement was unplanned, I am grateful that things lined up so that I could be available for my family. While I am still functioning as a caretaker, I would like to re-enter the workforce, when the time is right, in a 100% remote capacity to continue my work with older adult learners.



## Dr. Robyn Huss

**Position held:** Associate Professor

**Department:** Early Childhood Through  
Secondary Education

**Years of Service:** 2012-2023



### **Tribute Statement:**

It is with great honor that we celebrate the retirement of Dr. Robyn Huss, a distinguished member of our College of Education faculty for the past 10 years. Dr. Huss' unwavering commitment to education and her profound impact on both students and colleagues is truly admirable.

Robyn's teaching has inspired countless UWG students, many of whom have gone on to become excellent classroom teachers. Her dedication to mentorship has also been exemplary, guiding new faculty members and fostering an inclusive, collaborative, and supportive academic environment. She has been a driving force in our department and college community service efforts, participating in numerous committees and leading initiatives to support students and connect with local schools.

As Robyn steps into retirement, I want to say a huge thank you for everything she has done for our department, college, and university. She was one of the first people I met at UWG, and I would not be where I am today without her friendship and advice. Her legacy of excellence, kindness, and dedication will be felt for years to come. We wish her all the best in this new chapter - she's earned it!

*[Dr Jennifer Edelman; Associate Professor of Mathematics and Director of Data, Assessment, and Institutional Research for the College of Education; UWG]*

### **Plans for Retirement:**

- completing several home remodeling projects
- traveling
- taking on additional professional editing contracts

# Mark A. Kunkel, Ph.D.

**Position held:** Professor

**Departments:** Psychology; Anthropology,  
Psychology, and Sociology

**Years of Service:** 1999-2023

## **Tribute Statement:**

For many years, in teaching and friendship, Mark Kunkel walked with us as brothers and sisters through many places, landscapes of loss and longing, lighting the way with his loving intellect. He taught so many wonderful courses in the theory and practice of psychology. Mark's knowledge of psychoanalysis and his therapeutic wisdom became foundational for so many of us. He wrote many articles and books and served our academic community as a gentle and reliable guide. Above all, he challenged us to ask better questions, to evoke compassion within ourselves, so we might remain close enough to others to hear their struggles, to offer our hard-won insight and gifts to them. Mark profoundly embodies the Socratic ethic, which involves adopting a dialogical relation with others, closely pursuing a passion for learning, and committing oneself to the well-being of the community, grounding what presences as knowledge. He expressed the courage, passion, and clarity of mind to step into the stream of life with his students, to bring ever closer together trust and illumination.

*[John L. Roberts, Ph.D.; Associate Professor of Psychology; Department of Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology; UWG]*

## **Plans for Retirement:**

- continuing a private practice in psychotherapy in an office framed as sanctuary for respite from suffering
- maintaining consulting work with Carrollton City Schools as a Spanish-speaking psychologist doing psychological evaluations and participating in a federally-funded grant for in-school psychotherapy for students whose parents do not have access to such services
- continuing work on two books in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy
- living life and making music with his wife, Jeanette, and enjoying their 14-month old mini-Bernedoodle (Groot)
- trying to find time for sailing, travel (nationally and internationally) to see children and grandchildren
- refining and extending his commitment to being a full-time wanna-be human being



# Brian McCrary

**Positions held:** Assistant Director, Director

**Departments:** Learning Resources Center,  
Academic Technology Services (Information  
Technology Services)

**Years of Service:** 2003-2024



## Tribute Statement:

Brian McCrary engaged in many multi-media services over his years at UWG that enhanced the college experience for students, faculty, and staff. He never met a stranger and was an encourager of all people. Some of his accomplishments include the UWG classroom upgrades, developing the first classroom audio visual refresh program, and securing wireless audio-visual solutions.

Brian was manager of the full-service Multimedia department with a staff that helped develop the first audio visual standards for UWG, and secured funding for the campus-wide digital signage program. He developed the road map to allow data-driven decisions for classroom AV and identified the opportunity to bring \$1.2M in grant funds to UWG classroom upgrades. Brian also created justification and secured the first budget line for Classroom AV Repair and Renovation, and he was instrumental in the transition from Distributed IT on campus to Centralized IT.

Other areas that Brian worked to help implement were the Coliseum and Stadium score board video productions. In this role his staff actively participated in set up and operation of events.

Brian adopted the Servant Leadership philosophy, encouraging others and helping them develop their career paths in pursuit of their lifelong journeys. He will be missed at UWG.

*[Suzanne Horton, Senior Administrative Assistant, Information Technology Services, UWG]*

## Plans for Retirement:

- moving to Florida (July, 2024)
- working with stained glass
- kayaking and fishing
- foraging (sassafras root, berries, dandelions, mushrooms, wood ears, old man of the woods)
- scuba diving

# Elsa V. Pena

**Position held:** University Architect

**Department:** Campus Planning and Facilities

**Years of Service:** 2002-2023

## Tribute Statement:

Elsa spent countless hours in the pursuit of excellence in her chosen profession. Needless to say, she was and always has been a change agent. UWG reaped the benefits of her experience, expertise, professionalism, and hard work in delivering millions of dollars of projects that served the needs of her clients while meeting university goals. Perfecting her craft being a female from Chile in a non-traditional role was challenging and rewarding for Elsa.

When you look at Elsa’s career several “value/added” thoughts surface: delivering projects meeting and/or exceeding the client’s needs while meeting budgetary constraints and university goals, managing multiple projects at one time, managing “architects” hired by the University to achieve the desired results, allowing peers and other co-workers to play roles in delivering projects, and knowing how to say “no” and have it accepted by clients, peers, and superiors.

Typically, when we look back at our careers, there are items/issues that stand out. Elsa gave everything she had every day. An accomplished architect recognized by the Association of University Architects and the Southern Association of College and University Planning for her many contributions to the profession, she will always be one of the “Best of the Best.”

*[Michael R. Renfrow, retired Assistant Vice President, Campus Planning and Facilities, UWG]*

## Plans for Retirement:

- traveling, extensively, especially in Europe
- taking a river cruise from Budapest to Amsterdam
- gardening



## Stacey L. Rowland, B.B.A.

**Positions and Departments:** Accounting Assistant (Business Services); Staff Assistant (College of Education); GSAMS Coordinator (USG); Distance Education Specialist, eCore Advisor, Webmaster (Department of Distance and Distributed Education); Student Success Manager (eCore Administrative Services); Program Manager (Honors College)



**Years of Service:**1993-2023

### Tribute Statement:

Since 1993, Stacey's unwavering dedication and enthusiasm have made UWG a better place. Initially serving the Business division, Stacey found her passion for helping students in the COE, became a distance education leader, and then an integral part of the USG eCore (eMajor/eCampus) team serving thousands of students across Georgia and beyond. She was honored Employee of the Year, Advisor of the Year, and for Staff Excellence. More importantly, she was known for her collaborative spirit, willingness to lend a helping hand, and being an extraordinary co-worker and friend.

*[Janet Gubbins, Executive Director of Shared Services, USG eCampus]*

From 2012 until her retirement Stacey served as the student advisor and manager of Honors Programs in the Honors College. Stacey was invaluable to the Honors College for her consistently positive attitude and desire to help students, parents, faculty and staff. She was instrumental in creating a caring atmosphere within the Honors College that gave students a sense of belonging, pride, and achievement. She started a successful peer mentoring program, oversaw the implementation of many curriculum changes, and was vital to creating a new pre-college summer program. For Stacey, students were always front and center; she wanted to make sure they had the best possible experience they could have. She is infinitely kind, generous, and giving. The Honors College and UWG owe her a huge debt of gratitude and will not be the same without her.

*[Janet Donohoe, Professor Emerita of Philosophy, UWG]*

### Plans for Retirement:

Stacey has been excited to start a new career as Program and Research Manager for Georgia Memory Net at Emory University School of Medicine, Cognitive Neurology. This next chapter of her life is proving to be very rewarding and exciting also, and she is thankful to be a part of such a wonderful program.

# Mardel Shumake

**Position held:** Information Security Officer

**Department:** Information Technology Services

**Years of Service:**1998-2023



**Tribute Statement:**

Mardel’s impact is difficult to quantify. He was a part of several major projects, including transition to Google, multiple Microsoft Operating System upgrades, and countless audits. He was a critical player in UWG’s efforts to become compliant with PCI standards. He was highly engaged in ITS events, such as Winter West in 2023 – he was there every day and put in so much work to make the event special.

Mardel was a delight to work with. He treated colleagues as equals and focused on working toward common goals, not only for his immediate team and ITS but also for UWG. His humble approach in team settings would reassure that he offered all the insight and assistance he could, which is a rare trait for those of us in the Information Technology field.

Beyond his professional achievements, Mardel was a wonderful person to be around—compassionate and caring and with a sympathetic ear. He always sought to find understanding and solutions. His focus on teamwork and selfless service to our clients and his teammates will be sorely missed. We wish him the best in his retirement and appreciate everything he did to help keep cybersecurity in the culture here.

*[Kirk Inman, Chief Information Officer, and Staff; Information Technology Services, UWG]*

**Plans for Retirement:**

- resting and relaxing, spending most days in the recliner

## Renee Sparks

**Position held:** Nurse

**Department:** Health Services

**Years of Service:** 1997-2024

### **Tribute Statement:**

The definition of a nurse is simple. It is to care for the sick and infirm. Yet the role of a nurse is so much more detailed than those words alone suggest. Renee is a coworker and a friend. She has worked at West Georgia for 27 years. This was a large part of her career, and she dedicated those years to caring for the students at UWG. She has assisted the students with adjusting to navigating their own healthcare. She has watched students grow through their years at UWG and loved every minute. She has celebrated these students' successes and encouraged them when they were not feeling their best. Her care for the students was excellent, and the students loved her. She could "read between the lines" of what a student said and what he or she needed. Renee was kind and caring. She was willing to help anyone. Renee will be deeply missed, but we hope she enjoys her retirement and we wish her the best!

*[Kay Farr, Licensed Practical Nurse, retired from Health Services, UWG; Kelly Smith, Director of Nursing, Health Services, UWG]*

### **Plans for Retirement:**

- spending time with family
- taking care of family
- traveling
- reading



# James A. Yoder

**Position held:** Professor of Finance

**Department:** Accounting and Finance

**Years of Service:** 1996-2023



## **Tribute Statement:**

Jim Yoder earned his Ph.D. in Finance from the University of Florida in 1988. He spent eight years at the University of South Alabama before coming to West Georgia in 1996. In addition to his teaching duties at UWG, Jim served as the Finance Area Coordinator, chaired the RCOB Strategic Planning, and was a member of the Faculty Senate. He also had a second career in the U.S. Navy. While on active duty, he served on the USS Lafayette and the USS Eisenhower. He retired from the Navy Reserve in 1994.

Jim will be greatly missed in the Department of Accounting and Finance. He was a great colleague who was willing to do more than his share of departmental chores. He was dedicated to his students and kept their interests at the forefront. He worked to deliver informative classes and was always willing to meet with students outside of class when they needed course help or career mentoring.

Jim is also a great friend. He is easy-going, generous, honest, dependable, and loyal. He is a straightforward, no-hidden-agenda person, but he possesses a good sense of humor.

Enjoy your retirement at Gulf Shores (but come visit often)!

*[Ronald Best, Professor of Finance, Richards College of Business, UWG]*

## **Plans for Retirement:**

I own a condo at Gulf Shores and plan to be a beach bum at least for the first year.



## **In Memoriam (2023-2024)**

Virginia “Ginnie” Buchanan - Administrative Secretary, Accounting & Finance

Lillie Mae Cannon - Senior Departmental Assistant, Facilities

Dr. Florence Elliott “Cita” Cook - Professor Emerita, History

Dr. James Crowell - Professor, Mathematics

Dr. Gerald Farmer - Professor, Music

Kaye Ferguson - Senior Administrative Assistant, College of Education

Arturo José González - Bus Driver, Parking & Transportation

Linda Henson - Custodian, Facilities

Dr. Robert (Bob) Hilliard - Associate Professor Emeritus, Middle and Secondary Education

William “Billy” Howard - Custodian, Facilities

Dr. Frances “Fran” Jackson - Professor, Management & Information Systems

Othessia Jones - Custodian/Manager, Facilities

Dr. J. Wilton Key - Professor Emeritus, College of Education

Dr. Joseph Harrison McCraw - Professor Emeritus, Accounting & Finance

Dr. Nancy Griffin Mims - Professor Emerita, Department of Educational Leadership & Foundations

Dr. Glenn Novak - Professor Emeritus, Mass Communication/Theater Arts

Dr. Art Sanders - Professor Emeritus and Chairperson, Counseling & Educational Psychology

Dr. Joann Sanders - Professor Emerita, Early Childhood Education

Dr. Gloria Diane Sharp - Professor Emerita, Spanish

Betty Sue Tolbert Smith - Professor Emerita, Music

Dr. Walter Chester Todd - Assistant Professor, History; Assistant Professor, College of Education; Director of Intramurals, University Recreation







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